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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/46/3, A/46/61/Rev.1, A/46/7, A/46/16 and Add.1)

General debate (continued)

1. Mr. MORCZYNSKI (Poland), speaking on behalf of his country and the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, said that because of the political changes in Eastern Europe the United Nations could henceforth play a key role in solving regional conflicts, problems of development and the environment, human rights and drug control. To do so, it would need an adequate budget emphasizing the new priorities. His and the Czechoslovak delegation accepted the proposed rate of growth in order not to endanger any of the programmes approved by the General Assembly. However, they agreed with those who had suggested changes in the Secretary-General's proposals. They found it justified, for the sake of efficiency, to make the reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee in the Secretariat's technical activities under sections 33G, 33E and 35. They found it more difficult, however, to support the Advisory Committee's recommendations with respect to substantive activities. They therefore supported the Secretary-General's proposal to strengthen the staff of the High Commissioner for Refugees and the Centre for Human Rights.

2. The methodology of the budgeting process should reflect the priorities established in the medium-term plan as well as the changing needs of the international situation. Happily, many delegations seemed increasingly interested in eliminating marginally useful activities. His delegation and that of Czechoslovakia supported the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) to hold a technical seminar on questions of methodology. They also supported those who called for abandoning the concept of non-recurrent expenditures and for the maintenance of a clear distinction between extrabudgetary funds and the regular budget. With respect to staff, they shared the view of those who felt that not all the opportunities for redeployment of posts had been exhausted; reclassification should be reserved for those posts whose responsibilities had clearly increased, such as that of the Executive Secretary of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC). The proposed 0.9 per cent rate of real budget growth seemed reasonable, with some of the changes proposed by the Advisory Committee.

First reading (continued)

Section I: Overall policy-making, direction and coordination

3. The CHAIRMAN asked the Committee to decide on section 1 as a whole. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved on first reading the establishment of a credit of $35,283,800 under section 1, on the

basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, on the understanding that the questions raised in the first reading would be discussed during the unofficial consultations and the necessary corrections made.

4. It was so decided.

5. The CHAIRMAN said that the general reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee, which had implications for all sections of the programme budget, would be considered during the unofficial consultations and all the required changes made in the various sections. A list of the questions raised in the first reading would be sent to the Committee at the beginning of the consultations.

6. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) supported that decision provided that the necessary changes were made later, after the unofficial consultations, on the basis of the recommendations of the CPC and the Advisory Committee.

7. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that her delegation approved the figure, in the light of the Chairman's comments. She emphasized, however, that there had been no agreement with respect to paragraphs 1.1 and 1.48 concerning activities for which the General Assembly had given no mandate.

Section 2: Good offices and peace-making; peace-keeping; research and the collection of information

8. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) pointed out that Section 2 dealt largely with the maintenance of international peace and security, one of the Organization's five priority areas. That explained the 2 per cent growth rate, which was higher than the average for the programme budget as a whole. That order of priority also explained some of the Secretary-General's proposals, for example concerning UNTSO. The question of peace-keeping had been put before various bodies; the Committee would be informed of their conclusions. The Advisory Committee had referred to a Secretariat report on peace-keeping activities as a whole. That was an internal document whose range of distribution had not yet been decided by the Secretary-General, but the Secretariat would provide information on its status in the near future.

9. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee recommended in paragraph 2.16 of its report that the appropriation requested under section 2 should be reduced to $72,071,000. Part of the reduction was based on savings made in the biennium 1988-1989, under what had been section 2A. However, the composition of that section had not been quite the same as the composition of the present section 2.

(Mr. Mselle)

10. In paragraphs 2.8 and 2.9 the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction in the appropriations requested for the purchase and replacement of UNTSO and UNMOGIP vehicles. It was convinced that the estimates would have been considerably lower if the Secretariat had been aware of the prices which could be obtained by means of invitations to tender. Paragraph 2.38 of the programme budget indicated that UNTSO was a kind of support unit for the peace-keeping forces in the region, such as UNIFIL and UNDOF, which also used for their operations an observation post in the Suez Canal area, the cost of which was estimated at $1.7 million. The Advisory Committee, which also authorized the purchases of materials and equipment for UNIFIL and UNDOF, thought that better coordination might result in lower expenditures.

11. Where communications were concerned, the Advisory Committee was still not certain that the construction of a satellite earth station at Rawalpindi was absolutely necessary. It would keep that question under review in the light of the report which the Secretary-General was to submit on the telecommunications strategy for United Nations bodies. Lastly, in paragraphs 2.13 and 2.15 the Advisory Committee recommended that the Secretary-General's proposals concerning certain posts and certain ad hoc expert groups should not be approved. It was not convinced that the current staffing level was inadequate.

12. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that, in its conclusions and recommendations (paras. 77 to 79), the Committee had emphasized the importance of the Organization's activities with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security and had noted that, pursuant to resolution 45/253, the concept of peacemaking should be brought to the attention of the competent intergovernmental bodies and organizations of the United Nations. The Committee had been given the Secretariat's assurance that that would be done in time for the consideration of the programme budget by the Fifth Committee.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that he had been informed by the President of the General Assembly that the competent authority in that respect was the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations (Committee of Thirty-four) and that when that Committee had completed its report it would be sent to the Special Political Committee.

14. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) recalled that in its resolution 45/253, the General Assembly, recognizing that the Fifth Committee had not been in a position to examine such substantive issues as peace-making, had decided to defer consideration of those issues to the attention of the competent organs and intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations, without prejudice to the functions of the Secretary-General under the Charter of the United Nations. The consultations which had preceded the adoption of that resolution had been very delicate and many delegations had had to compromise substantially. The Secretariat had then made the commitment to submit a document on the concept of peace-making to the competent bodies of the General Assembly, in

(Mrs. Goicochea, Cuba)

particular, the Fifth Committee, before their next sessions. More than 10 months had now elapsed and the Fifth Committee still did not have before it a precise definition of that concept. Her delegation therefore believed that the Committee was not in a position to take a decision regarding section 2.

15. Mrs. RODSMOEN (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, reiterated their strong support for United Nations peace-keeping operations, the major importance of which had just been demonstrated by recent activities in that field. The Secretary-General should have at his disposal the resources he required in order to monitor the world situation and rapidly detect any threats to peace and international security. Research and the collection of information were particularly important in that regard. The Nordic countries could accept the estimate submitted, as well as the rate of growth, which could be attributed in large measure to the activities of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). That section would have shown little or no growth without those activities. The Secretary-General had also called for a substantial increase in the estimates for research and the collection of information, but those activities accounted for only a small part of the resources requested for the section as a whole. The Nordic countries had noted that the Advisory Committee had recommended a general reduction and specific reductions for the section totalling 3 per cent of the estimate submitted, which carried the risk of negative growth, whereas general reductions of only 2 per cent were envisaged for other activities. Those recommendations seemed to be inconsistent with the wishes of the General Assembly regarding that category of activities.

16. While they did not wish to go into the recommended reductions in detail, the Nordic countries were concerned at the general reduction of $900,000 requested for section 2; indeed, the Advisory Committee had recommended greater reductions for only four other sections. They therefore wished to receive precise information on the method used to apportion the general reductions and wished to know to what extent they were additional to the specific reductions. In view of the scope of the reductions proposed for section 2, they should be considered in informal consultations.

17. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the 12 States which were members of the European Community, said that peace-making and peace-keeping activities constituted one of the primary functions of the Organization. The Twelve believed that it was entirely appropriate to discuss section 2 at the current stage. The debate which was under way in a subsidiary body did not affect the resources proposed for section 2. The narrative simply could be altered to reflect any decisions of the Special Political Committee which should be incorporated in the medium-term plan and the texts authorizing the corresponding programmes. As to the recommendations of ACABQ, the Twelve at that stage simply wished to underscore the importance which they attached to research and the collection of information; it was essential to adopt effective measures in that area which would enable the Secretary-General to elaborate a coherent policy with respect to peace-making and conflict prevention.

18. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) recalled the conclusions of CPC concerning the concept of peace-making. In his view, the Committee could not take a decision on section 2 unless an official decision had been adopted by the competent bodies. That was also true for section 31. The matter should be resolved as soon as possible in order to accelerate the budget adoption process.

19. Mr. JADMANI (Pakistan) endorsed the views expressed by the representative of Norway. He emphasized that UNMOGIP had an important mission to discharge and therefore should be given all necessary means to discharge it most effectively.

20. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that section 2 covered essential activities mandated by the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. Since the Secretary-General would in the future undoubtedly be called upon to play an even more important role in conflict resolution, it would be unwise for the General Assembly to adopt measures that would restrict that role. During the current biennium, the cost of peace-keeping and related activities had increased substantially. It was therefore essential for Member States to receive full information on their financing.

21. His delegation would appreciate receiving clarification regarding the status of the analytical report on peace-keeping operations which the Secretary-General was to issue at the current session. In its view, detailed financial and management reports should be provided upon the conclusion of each such mission or, if they continued for several years, at the end of the biennium. In most cases, the General Assembly did not have sufficient information to approve the corresponding budgets.

22. While his delegation strongly supported the Secretary-General's ongoing efforts to find a solution to the Cambodian problem, it believed that it would be inappropriate to convert the temporary posts in the Office of the Special Representative to permanent posts and therefore endorsed the recommendation of ACABQ in paragraph 2.7 of its report.

23. The Secretary-General should undertake significant efforts to increase the level of voluntary contributions to UNTSO and UNMOGIP. His delegation noted in that regard that one Government had made an aircraft available to UNTSO. It would like to know whether an effort had been made to secure similar assistance for UNMOGIP. That would obviate the need for the substantial increase mentioned in paragraph 2.61. The explanations in the paragraph to justify the rental of a more costly aircraft were unclear. The Secretariat should clarify the situation.

24. ACABQ had made a number of important recommendations regarding the financing of UNTSO and UNMOGIP. His delegation believed that the time had come for a thorough evaluation of each of those operations, the results of which should be reported to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. In particular, it should be possible to reduce the number of local staff.

(Mr. Cohen, United States)

25. The Advisory Committee had requested the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive review of the Office of the United Nations Coordinator for Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to Afghanistan. The United States delegation would appreciate further information from the Secretariat and ACABQ in that regard.

26. The relationship between the work of the Office of the Coordinator of Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon and the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services was not clear. His delegation thought that all activities related to Lebanon should be combined under the management of one official.

27. The Office for Research and the Collection of Information had now joined the ranks of several other entities dealing with refugee issues. The United States wondered why responsibility for refugees was so divided. Furthermore, while it recognized the need to monitor world political developments, it did not believe that that required strengthening the Office. The first step should be to make better use of other sources of information, such as the reports prepared by the Political Affairs Division and the Department of Public Information's centres and services.

28. Ms. BEAULIEU (Canada) said that she shared the Nordic countries' concern regarding the two types of reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee. In percentage terms, the total reduction suggested for section 2 was much greater than for the programme budget as a whole. The figures were probably based on a comparison with the preceding biennium's programmes, which were not necessarily identical. Her delegation would appreciate a more detailed explanation in order to make sure that those reductions would not be detrimental to priority programmes. She also wondered whether the reduction recommended for vehicles might not be excessive and lead to increased maintenance costs.

29. Mr. THIRUNAGARAN (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), regretted that the Advisory Committee had not recommended approval of conversion to established posts of four temporary posts in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in South-East Asia. ACABQ gave no specific reason other than the fact that it was not convinced. In paragraph 70 of its report, CPC noted that the proposal had been questioned, but it did not state exactly what its views were on the subject. The Office of the Special Representative had not been established just to handle the sole problem of settling the Cambodian conflict. Its mandate covered many delicate i sues that should be dealt with at the regional level, including humanitarian assistance, refugee problems in South-East Asia, acts of piracy on the China Sea and peace-keeping. It was the main link between the international community and the Secretary-General for all of those questions.

(Mr. Thirunagaran, Singapore)

30. With respect to the settlement of the Cambodian confict, the ASEAN countries believed that the Organization would have a decisive role to play in the period ahead. Peace-keeping operations and reconstruction work in Cambodia would probably go on for a number of years. That would justify maintaining the Office for a fairly long period of time, and it would probably even be necessary to strengthen it. Moreover, the conversion of temporary posts to permanent posts would not have financial implications. The General Assembly had already approved two permanent posts for that section, and, from the standpoint of responsibilities, there was no difference between those posts and the ones suggested for conversion. For the incumbents of those posts to enjoy satisfactory working conditions, it was necessary to guarantee them a certain degree of security. The ASEAN countries therefore strongly supported the Secretary-General's proposal and urged the Advisory Committee to reconsider its recommendation.

31. Miss SHITAKHA (Kenya) said that, on the whole, her delegation supported the recommendations of ACABQ. Referring to the abnormally high rent increase mentioned in paragraph 2.59 of the proposed programme budget, she said that, as a rule, the Organization should avoid renting premises from private parties looking to make exorbitant profits, rendered all the more excessive in the case in question, by the fact that the United Nations had improved the property. She would like to know whether there were analogous situations elsewhere and hoped that, when the lease came up for renewal, a more advantageous arrangement would be found.

32. Mr. RAE (India) said that, as other speakers had already stated, it was important for peace-keeping operations to be managed effectively and efficiently. He was looking forward to reading the study being prepared and hoped that it would lead to additional saving and greater rationalization.

33. Generally speaking, his delegation supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations. The resources requested for vehicles for the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) did seem a bit excessive. As for rental and maintenance of premises, the host countries should cover those expenses. He wondered whether the Government of the host country of UNMOGIP had been approached in that regard. As the representative of Kenya had said, renting from private parties was to be avoided. It should certainly have been possible to find an alternative solution for UNMOGIP. His delegation wholeheartedly supported the recommendations contained in paragraphs 2.10 to 2.13 and 2.15 of the report of ACABQ.

34. Mr. WU Gang (China) said that, while his country attached considerable importance to peace-keeping operations, it also advocated the most efficient management possible. In that spirit, it approved the Advisory Committee's recommendations regarding vehicles and other equipment for UNTSO and UNMOGIP. Considerable savings could certainly be achieved through greater budgetary austerity. With respect to the conversion of four temporary posts to permanent posts, his delegation shared to some extent the views expressed by

(Mr. Wu Gang, China)

the representative of Singapore. As that proposal did not have any financial implications, it would appreciate receiving clarification from ACABQ on its position.

35. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom), referring to item 6 of table 2.3, wished to know whether some of the expenditure headings under which no funding was requested in 1992-1993 were actually recurrent expenses. If they were, the Secretariat should indicate whether the activity in question was the result of a decision of an intergovernmental body and, if so, whether it was regularly reviewed by the competent body.

36. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) noted that, according to paragraph 2.44 of the programme budget, construction of an additional office building in Jerusalem would absorb almost a quarter of the amount budgeted for rental and maintenance of premises. He asked the Secretariat for further information on the supposed "acute shortage of office space" at UNTSO.

37. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), referring to United Nations activities in Lebanon, said that a distinction must be made between on-site activities, which were covered by section 2, and Headquarters activities, which were described in section 4. The case at issue involved not duplication but a division of labour. With respect to the Office for Research and the Collection of Information, he recalled that the General Assembly itself had requested that the Office should become involved in efforts to prevent new flows of refugees. In any case, the Secretariat would shortly present a comprehensive report on the subject to the Second Committee. With respect to the internal report prepared by the Secretariat on peace-keeping operations, he hoped that he would soon be able to inform the Committee of the Secretary-General's intentions with regard to the dissemination of that document. With respect to UNOCA, the United Nations Internal Auditors had completed their work and a mission had been dispatched to Geneva and to Afghanistan.

38. As for UNTSO and UNMOGIP, he recalled that the appropriations requested were explained in part by the underestimation of expenses in previous budget periods. Delegations would receive more details on the subject in informal consultations.

39. In reply to the representative of Kenya, he said that the Secretariat had tried in vain to negotiate the rent which the United Nations was asked to pay in Rawalpindi. He would revert at a later stage to the other points raised by delegations.

40. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that he wished to stress that ACABQ recognized the priority of peace-keeping or peace-making activities, which were moreover increasing in volume. Nevertheless, such activities must be governed by the same criteria of efficiency and productivity as other activities. It was by

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virtue of that principle, which it supported, that from time to time the Advisory Committee requested from the Secretariat a special report on a given operation. It could not be alleged that the Advisory Committee was trying to have recommendations adopted which would make the Secretary-General's work more difficult. At that stage it was merely indicating that the amounts requested by the Secretariat could be reduced.

41. With regard to the recommendation concerning the conversion of the temporary posts in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in South-East Asia, he drew attention to the comments made in paragraphs 2.5 and 2.7 of the ACABQ report. Requests for reclassification or conversion of posts were sometimes made for reasons other than the ones officially put forward. In the case in question the Advisory Committee thought that the requested conversion was not justified and made a corresponding recommendation. That was not a decision: it was for the Fifth Committee to decide.

42. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that paragraph 70 of the CPC report, concerning the conversion of temporary posts in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in South-east Asia, accurately reflected the discussion in CPC. Having decided not to give an opinion on post reclassifications or conversions, CPC had not formulated any conclusion. That being the case, she agreed with ACABQ that the Secretariat should give the real reasons for that type of proposal.

43. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that his Government might not renew its contribution to the Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund if it did not receive specific information on the use of its previous contributions. He asked when that information would be provided to Member States.

44. Mr. THIRUNAGARAN (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Association of South-east Asian Nations, said that the Secretariat should be able to explain more convincingly to ACABQ why, at a time when the United Nations was launching the most complex operation in its history, as it had been described by the Secretariat in a press release, the Office of the Special Representative would continue to require the posts mentioned in paragraph 2.15 of the proposed programme budget.

45. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) recalled that the concept of "recurrent" posts had been suppressed. If the Secretary-General proposed to convert certain temporary posts to permanent posts, it was because the Organization would continue to require the skills of such personnel in subsequent budget periods. Of course, it was for the Committee to decide whether those proposals were justified.

46. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) reminded the representative of Singapore that the Advisory Committee would consider separately the budget of the United Nations operations in Cambodia which the Secretary-General was to draw up on the basis of the decisions of the Security Council. The proposals under consideration concerned activities under the regular budget and should be examined in that context. Furthermore, he wished to stress once again with regard to procedural problems that decision-making was the prerogative of the Fifth Committee.

47. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) proposed that, for the reasons she had just given, the Office of the Legal Counsel should be invited to give an opinion on the validity of the procedure followed by the Fifth Committee with respect to section 2.

48. The CHAIRMAN said he felt that, taking into account the proviso included in the decisions taken in first reading, the Committee could take a decision on section 2 at the current stage.

49. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) reiterated her request that the Office of the Legal Counsel be consulted.

50. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that a decision to request a legal opinion should be taken by the Committee as a whole. Moreover, the issue of the Committee's competence was a matter within the purview of the General Committee, which had referred item 107 to the Fifth Committee. He had often had occasion to question the Fifth Committee's competence with respect to the many substantive questions it had considered in the context of the medium-term plan. He would like to know the reactions of other delegations on that subject and to obtain, if possible, other informed opinions. He also bore in mind rule 121 of the rules of procedure; he did not intend to ask for a vote, but that solution would seem acceptable, since the question was of a procedural nature.

51. His delegation supported the Chairman's suggestion that the Committee should proceed with its first reading of section 2 as it had in the case of section 1.

52. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should defer its decision so that he could consult with the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, the Special Political Committee and, possibly, the President of the General Assembly.

53. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said he had reservations about that procedure, which departed from the decision taken by the entire Committee following its consideration of section 1. However, if the Committee agreed to resume consideration of section 2 at its next meeting, his delegation would not raise any objection.

54. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) pointed out that in general, requests for a legal opinion were not rejected. She saw no difficulty in applying rule 121 of the rules of procedure. Nevertheless, she was ready to accept the Chairman's suggestion in a spirit of conciliation.

55. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to postpone a decision on section 2 of the proposed programme budget.

56. It was so decided.

Section 3. Political and Security Council Affairs

57. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) noted that the section had been favourably affected by the priority attached to questions relating to international peace and security. The Committee would have noted the 2 per cent growth rate, which was slightly higher than the average growth rate. It would also have noted that a large allocation ($960,700) had been requested for external printing and binding (para. 3.8 of the proposed programme budget). ACABQ's recommendation on the matter appeared in paragraph 3.4 of its report. He noted that the allocation was centrally managed and that in some circumstances the Secretariat could transfer funds from one section to another, on the understanding that it must so indicate in its reports on budget implementation.

58. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) confirmed that most of the reduction recommended under section 3 related to contractual printing. In the light of actual expenditure in previous bienniums ACABQ recommended an overall reduction of $1,878,500. The reduction was further justified by the introduction of new technology and the planned increase in the production capacity of the documents-production services. The reduction recommended for that item of expenditure under section 3 should give rise to even fewer difficulties since the appropriations for the work in question were grouped in a central account, an arrangement which enabled the Secretariat to switch funds from one section to another in the light of needs.

59. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) pointed out that for the first time priorities had been proposed for the section, in the case of the subprogrammes as well as the activities. The fact that CPC had taken note of that fact did not mean that it was completely satisfied. It had simply noted that the Secretariat had made an effort to establish priorities in spite of the technical difficulties involved.

60. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) expressed satisfaction at the decrease in costs for the printing of official documents of the Security Council but said that he remained concerned at the large amounts still allocated since, in view of the delays involved, those documents were of merely historical interest by the time they were published. He asked what the

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reasons were for those delays and how many staff members were involved in the work. If it was because of their format that the documents had to be printed externally, the format should be changed. It appeared from section 32, moreover, that it was sometimes more economical to have the translation and editing done externally. Greater use might therefore be made of that procedure, which would make it possible to reduce the permanent staff costs of the Department of Conference Services. Those comments and requests for information also applied to the Repertoire of Practice of the Security Council. As that was one of the rare United Nations publications which was very useful to Governments and research workers, it was unfortunate that the Supplement which was to be published during the 1992-1993 biennium covered only the period 1985-1988.

61. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly would take a decision requiring the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which continued to hold some meetings in Geneva, to hold all its meetings at Headquarters in New York.

62. Lastly, he raised the question of the implementation of the resolution on the remuneration of General Service staff adopted by the General Assembly in 1990. He would like the Secretariat to prepare a table showing the approximate total savings which could be effected under each section of the budget if the resolution were fully implemented in the case of General Service staff in New York.

63. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) asked what allocations were foreseen in the case of the activity referred to in paragraph 3.24, 1, (b), vii of the proposed programme budget and on the basis of what criteria the activities referred to in paragraph 3.30, 2, (b), iii had been programmed. He also asked when the last meeting of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had taken place.

64. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to decide on CPC's recommendations. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination with respect to chapter 3 (A/46/16, part II, paras. 85 and 86).

65. It was so decided.

66. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to decide on section 3 as a whole. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved on first reading the allocation of $16,077,300 under section 3, on the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations and on the understanding that the questions raised in the first reading would be taken up during the unofficial consultations and the necessary changes made.

67. It was so decided.

Section 4. Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services

68. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) explained, firstly, that the relatively high rate of growth (5.4 per cent) was due essentially to the increase in the number of meetings requested by various bodies; secondly, that at the request of CPC, the Secretariat was putting the finishing touches on a report on the printing services which fell under both sections 4 and 32. He hoped that the Committee would agree to consider that report in connection with section 32.

69. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the total reduction of $59,100 recommended under section 4 represented only the impact on the section of the overall reductions recommended by ACABQ. In paragraph 4.8 of its report the Advisory Committee made a recommendation concerning editorial services which was based on concerns different from those of CPC. It thought that the editorial functions should be modernized and rendered more coherent throughout the Organization.

70. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) introduced the recommendations and conclusions of CPC contained in paragraphs 94 to 97 of its report. The recommendation concerning consideration of the printing services was the result of the discussions summarized in paragraph 89. Although CPC had made no recommendation concerning the reclassification of posts, she pointed out that the request for reclassification of the post of CPC's secretary, which appeared in paragraph 4.20 of the proposed programme budget, had not been opposed.

71. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that he supported the recommendation on the modernization of the editorial functions in paragraph 4.8 of ACABQ's report and the recommendation on hospitality costs appearing in paragraph 4.11 and justified in paragraph 67 of the first section of that report. He hoped that the Committee would take a specific decision on those recommendations and adopt the same procedure for all of the Advisory Committee's recommendations.

72. With respect to the proposal to reclassify the post of secretary of the CPC from P-4 to P-5, Mr. Baudot had indicated that the post had been at the D-1 level earlier. He asked when that had been and what the job description had been at that time.

73. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) welcomed the fact that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had minimized travel expenditures for its members, but did not understand why the Advisory Committee had not, as it had in other cases, adjusted travel estimates for 1992-1993 to reflect past expenditure patterns. His delegation also questioned the need to increase the appropriation request for official functions of the Chairman of the Committee and wished to know why the estimate was included in the budget of the Division for Palestinian Rights and not in the Committee's budget.

(Mr. Michalski, United States)

74. There were substantial increases in expenditures for meetings organized by the Division (A/46/6/Rev.1, vol. I, para. 4.30). Not all the meetings planned in previous bienniums had actually been held and previous estimates had been systematically inflated rather than being based on past expenditure patterns. Accordingly his delegation would appreciate a paper from the Secretariat comparing the number of meetings planned and the number actually held for each of the past three bienniums, and also comparing appropriations and actual expenditures. He recalled that his delegation's reservation regarding the activities of the Committee and Division was reflected in paragraph 93 of the report of CPC. He would not request a vote on the appropriations for the two bodies, but that should not be interpreted as a change in the United States position.

75. With regard to the budget request for the Office for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services, the Advisory Committee, in paragraph 4.8 of its report, had noted various problems caused by the archaic manner in which editorial functions were carried out. His delegation would appreciate a detailed explanation from the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on that point and clarification from the Secretariat of why the introduction of new technology had not led to productivity gains. The Advisory Committee had rightly recommended that the Secretary-General should modernize editorial functions. His delegation believed that the management consultant study proposed by the United States for the Department of Conference Services should be extended to editorial functions. Japan had supported that proposal.

76. In view of the Advisory Committee's findings, it was surprising that it had recommended the establishment of a new P-4 post in the Division of Economic and Social Council Affairs and Secretariat Services, on the ground of increased intergovernmental activity in the economic and social fields. Such an increase would suggest that the recommendation of the Group of 18 to streamline the decision-making process in those areas would no longer be pursued. His delegation opposed the addition of the P-4 post and asked for the matter to be considered in greater detail in informal consultations.

77. In the CPC session a number of delegations had questioned the rationale for maintaining separate Divisions for General Assembly Affairs and for Economic and Social Council Affairs and Secretariat Services. The Secretariat had apparently pursued the possibility of a merger, but without success. His delegation believed that those efforts should be renewed in the quest for greater efficiency and economy.

78. Mr. LEV (Israel) said that his delegation had serious reservations regarding the estimates for the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Right of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights. Those activities were not constructive and did nothing to further the search for a peaceful solution to the problems of the region.

79. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said, with respect to the proposal in paragraph 4.20 of the proposed programme budget, that a number of difficulties would arise if the practice spread. Accordingly he supported the views expressed on the matter by the representative of the United States of America.

80. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said, in connection with paragraph 4.10 of the Advisory Committee's report, which had been reviewed under section 1, that he fully supported the statement made by the Chairman of CPC in that connection. He trusted that the Secretariat would provide, in the informal consultations, clarification of the various questions which had arisen in connection with the proposal, relating, inter alia, to the fact that the current incumbent was already at the P-5 level.

81. His delegation supported the estimates for the Division for Palestinian Rights and stressed the fact that, as long as the recent initiatives undertaken in that domain had not led to a settlement of the question of Palestine, the General Assembly should continue to approve appropriations for the Division.

82. Mr. MONAYAIR (Kuwait) said that his delegation supported the estimates for the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, whose activities were essential.

83. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), referring to the comments made by the representative of the United States, said that thousands of documents were still edited by hand. The use of computer technology, in particular a software programme designed with the Organization's particular needs in mind, would speed up editing work considerably and help to eliminate the delays which so often impeded the work of intergovernmental bodies.

84. With regard to the procedure for consideration of the budget, he took it for granted that, in accordance with the established practice, any ACABQ recommendation which was not expressly rejected by the Fifth Committee was regarded as approved, regardless of whether it was specifically mentioned.

85. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on section 4, as contained in paragraphs 94 to 97 of its report (A/46/16).

86. It was so decided.

87. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take action on section 4 as a whole. If he heard no objection, he would take it that on the basis of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the Committee wished to approve in first reading an appropriation in the amount of $12,733,500 under section 4 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 4 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

88. It was so decided.

89. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that the Secretariat intended to provide certain additional information during the informal consultations. He would have preferred the information to have been made available in a formal meeting so that it would have been reflected in the summary record. He hoped that under the remaining budget sections the Secretariat would reply to delegations as quickly as possible.

90. The CHAIRMAN endorsed those remarks.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.